

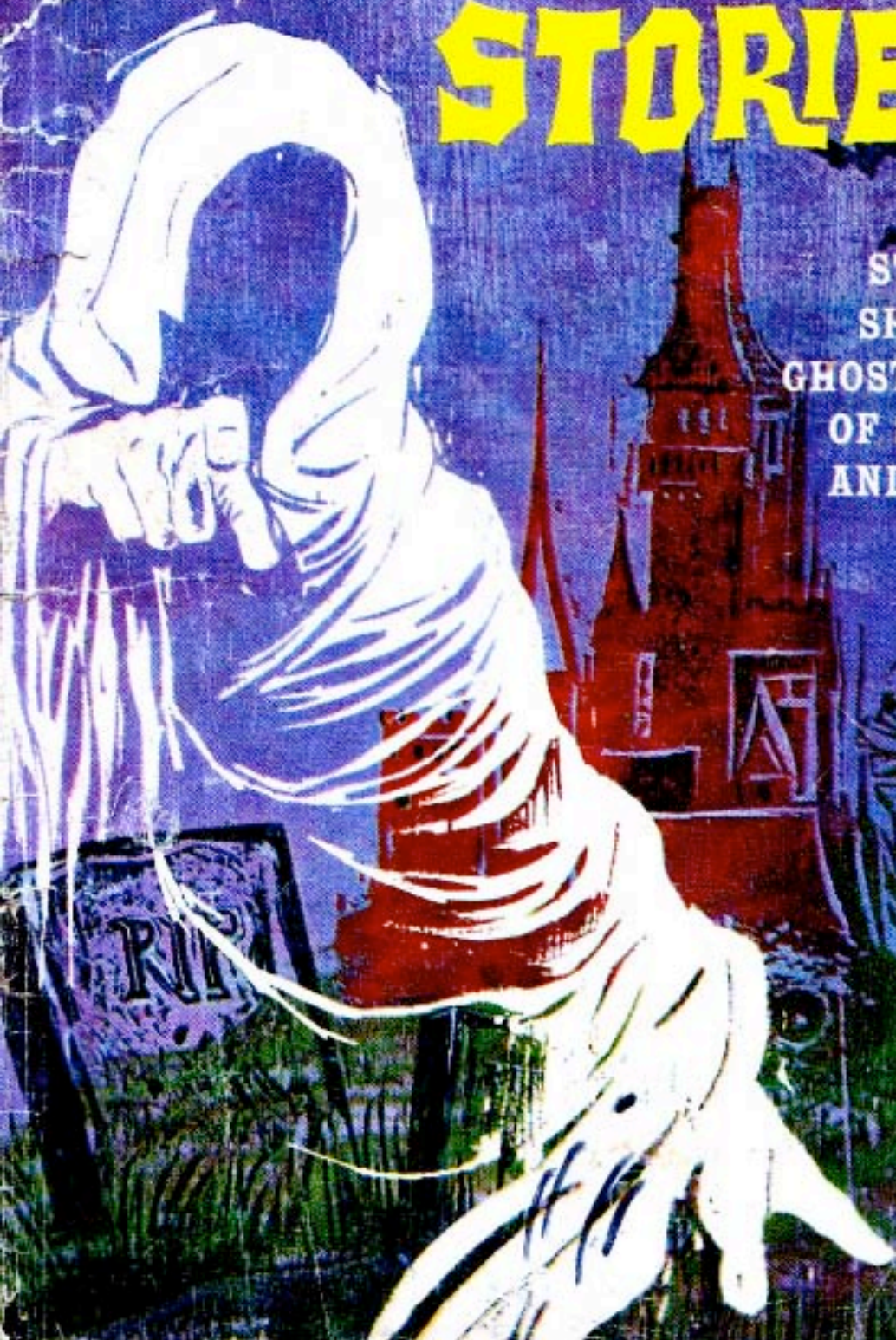
**DELL**  
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# GHOST STORIES

STORIES TO  
SHOCK YOU!  
GHOSTLY TALES  
OF SUSPENSE  
AND TERROR!



# “The Monster of Dread End...”

Originally Published: “Ghost Stories” #1, Dell Comics, September 1962

Writer: John Stanley

Art By: Ed Robbins

Submitted by: E.M. Tonner

## **Preface**

The year was 1962.

The Beatles had signed with Brian Epstein earlier in the year and released their debut single, “Love Me Do”. In response to the Soviet Union agreeing to remove its missiles from Cuba, US President John F. Kennedy ends the quarantine of the Caribbean nation. Film actress and sex icon, Marilyn Monroe is found dead in her Los Angeles, California home after apparently overdosing on sleeping pills. Amazing Fantasy issue 15 (the first appearance of Spider-Man) is released in August. Dell Comics releases “Ghost Stories” #1 one month later. The Comics Code Authority had been in effect for eight years.

Dell Comics never joined the Comics Code Authority. Their comics were clearly intended for young children, having the Disney license as well as other children’s properties. Dell refused to join the Code and instead began publishing in its comics a "Pledge to Parents" that promised their editorial process "eliminates, rather than regulates, objectionable [sic] material" and concluded with the now classic credo "Dell Comics Are Good Comics."<sup>1</sup>

However, 1962 was a transitional year for Dell. The long partnership Dell Comics had held with Western Publishing dissolved. Western decided to create its own in-house comic publishing company, Gold Key Comics. With the departure of Western went the Disney and Warner Bros. licenses and left Dell Comics at a crossroads. Not only had it lost a large portion of its licensed titles, many artists and writers had followed the titles to Gold Key Comics.

One writer who didn’t jump ship was John Stanley. Fans of comics will associate John Stanley with “Little Lulu” and “Nancy and Sluggo”. He scripted “Little Lulu” from 1945 to 1959 as well as providing the artwork with Irving Tripp. With the loss of most its licensed titles, Dell knew they had to come up with something fast. They also knew that the Code had left a rather large vacuum in the field of horror comics. Simply put, there were none.

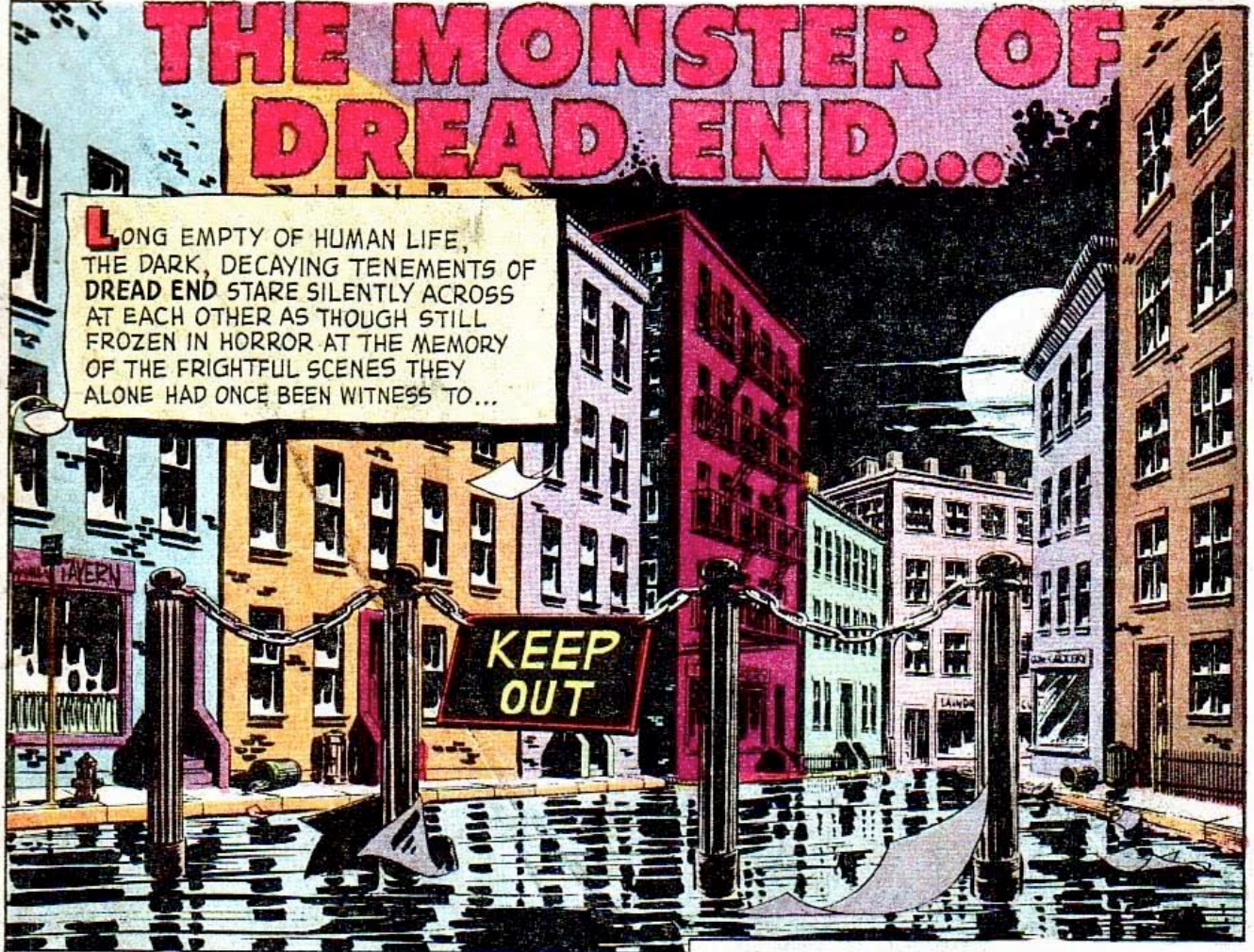
It was this set of unique circumstances that led Dell to tap on the shoulder of Mr. John Stanley to pen ONE issue of their new title “Ghost Stories”. The consummate professional, John Stanley pulled off one of the greatest horror comic stories of all time. That’s right, he only wrote one issue in what could be considered one of the greatest style departures in the history of comics. But you will remember “The Monster of Dread End...” It had one of the greatest monsters in any scary comic book ever.

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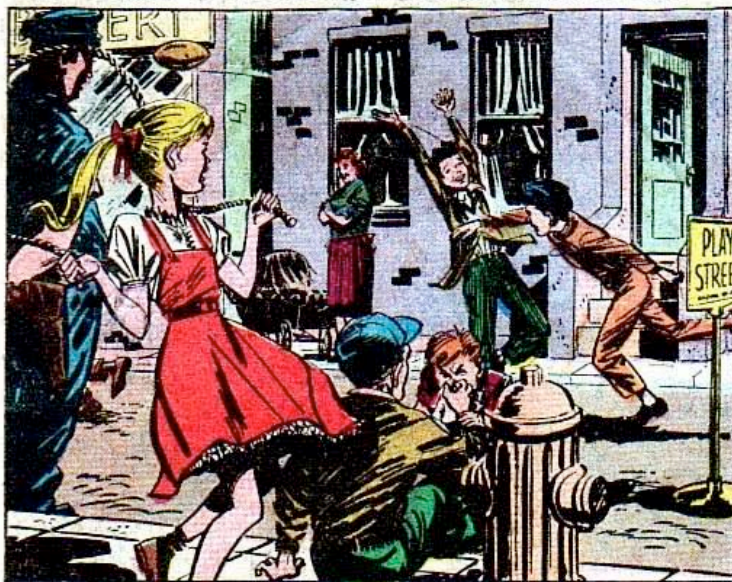
<sup>1</sup> Taken from the Wikipedia entry on Dell Comics.

# THE MONSTER OF DREAD END...

**L**ONG EMPTY OF HUMAN LIFE, THE DARK, DECAYING TENEMENTS OF DREAD END STARE SILENTLY ACROSS AT EACH OTHER AS THOUGH STILL FROZEN IN HORROR AT THE MEMORY OF THE FRIGHTFUL SCENES THEY ALONE HAD ONCE BEEN WITNESS TO...



**T**IME WAS... WHEN DREAD END, THEN KNOWN AS HAWTHORN PLACE, WAS A BUSY, NOISY, HAPPY STREET THAT ECHOED TO THE SOUND OF CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER...



...THEN EARLY ONE MORNING THE FIRST... ONE... WAS FOUND...



...IT WAS A BALLED-UP THING...LIKE AN EMPTY WRAPPER THROWN CARELESSLY ASIDE... BUT SOMEHOW STILL RECOGNIZABLE AS HAVING ONCE BEEN HUMAN...

HOW D'YA WRITE THIS ONE UP, M'LAD?

ALL RIGHT, BACK EVERYBODY! BACK!

HEY! MY KID SISTER IS MISSING! HER BED IS EMPTY--!



FOR DAYS THE POLICE ASKED QUESTIONS... BUT NO ONE HAD SEEN OR HEARD ANYTHING...

A FEW WEEKS PASSED... THEN EARLY ONE MORNING...

GET UP, SONNY! YOU'LL BE LATE FOR SCHOOL-- OH!



OUTSIDE ON THE STREET ANOTHER BALLED-UP THING WAS FOUND...

INCH BY INCH THE BEST BRAINS OF THE BEST POLICE DEPARTMENT IN THE WORLD COMBED THE AREA...

**POLICE!**

NOTHING CHIEF... ABSOLUTELY NOTHING...

WHAT NOW CHIEF?

I DON'T KNOW... IF THIS WERE ONLY THE WORK OF AN ORDINARY RUN-OF-THE-MILL MANIAC...

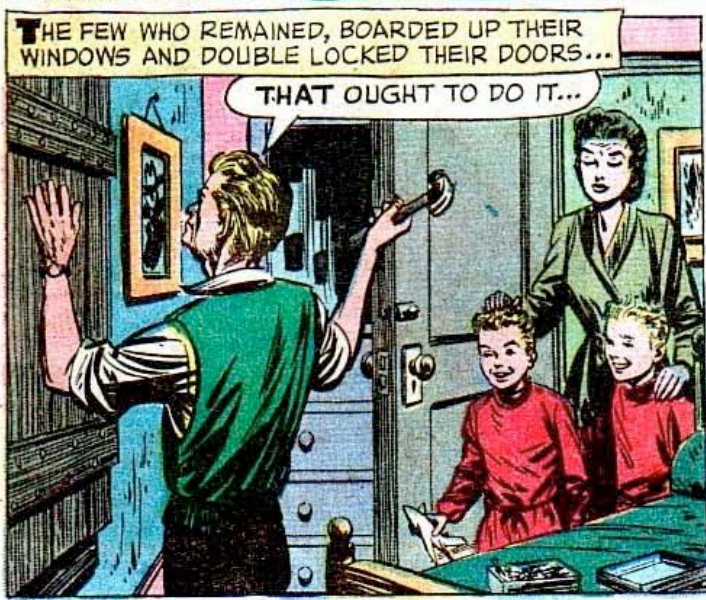




**W**HEN, A WEEK LATER, IT HAPPENED AGAIN, THE PANIC-STRICKEN INHABITANTS OF HAWTHORN PLACE BEGAN TO FLEE, SOME EVEN LEAVING THEIR FURNITURE BEHIND...

I DON'T CARE IF WE HAVE NOWHERE TO GO--AS LONG AS WE GET AWAY FROM HERE...

**HURRY!**



THE FEW WHO REMAINED, BOARDED UP THEIR WINDOWS AND DOUBLE LOCKED THEIR DOORS...

THAT OUGHT TO DO IT...

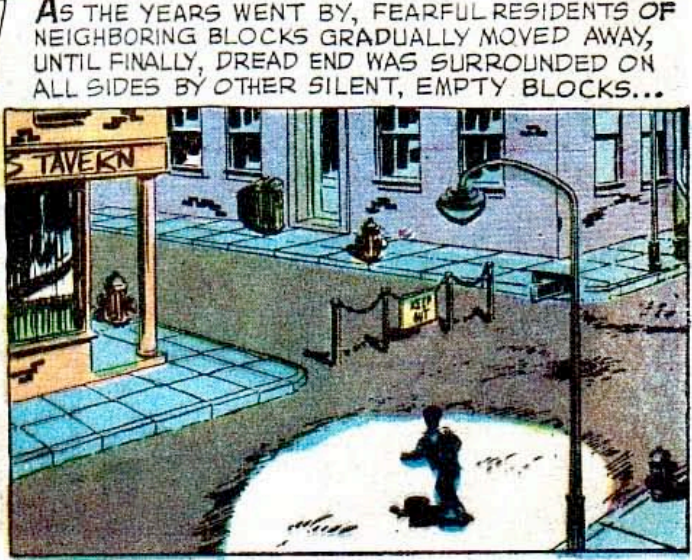


BUT AGAIN THE TERROR STRUCK!

THE TWINS ARE GONE!!

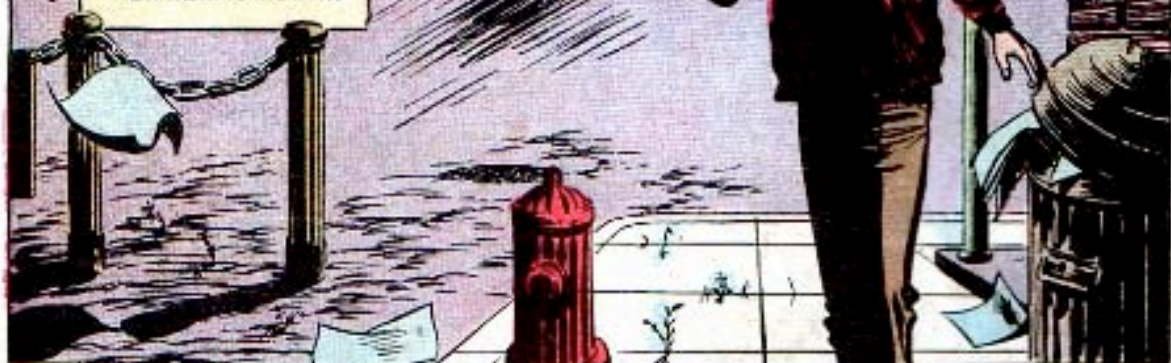


COMPLETELY BAFLED, THE AUTHORITIES COULD ONLY EVACUATE THE REMAINING TENANTS, AND DECLARE THE STREET OUT OF BOUNDS TO ALL...



AS THE YEARS WENT BY, FEARFUL RESIDENTS OF NEIGHBORING BLOCKS GRADUALLY MOVED AWAY, UNTIL FINALLY, DREAD END WAS SURROUNDED ON ALL SIDES BY OTHER SILENT, EMPTY BLOCKS...

**A**FTER DARK, NO ONE EVER DARED VENTURE INTO EVEN THE OUTER FRINGES OF THIS NO-MAN'S-LAND, LET ALONE THE VERY CENTER OF IT... UNTIL... TONIGHT...



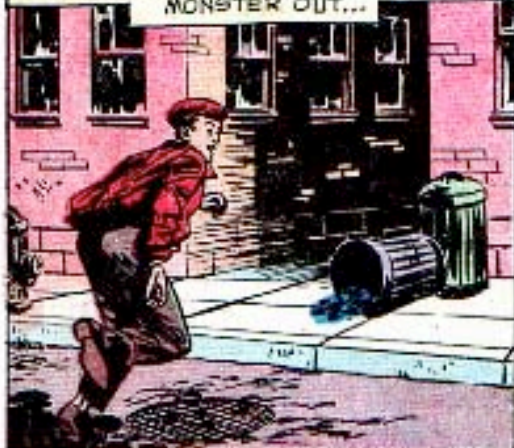
**T**HOUGH ONLY SEVEN WHEN HIS LITTLE SISTER BECAME THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE DREAD END MONSTER, JIMMY WHITE RESOLVED THAT IF THE POLICE DIDN'T FIND HER KILLER, SOME DAY HE WOULD...



**A**S JIMMY GREW OLDER, HE BECAME MORE AND MORE OBSESSED WITH THE IDEA THAT THE KILLER STILL LURKED SOMEWHERE ON THAT SINISTER BLOCK...



**N**OW, AT THE AGE OF 15, JIMMY FEELS HE IS OLD ENOUGH TO FERRET THE MONSTER OUT...

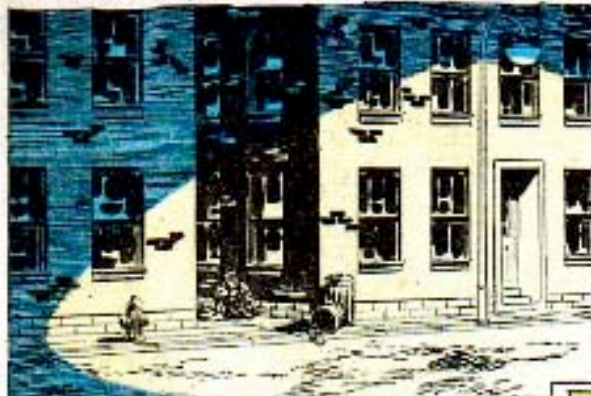


**S**ROUCHED IN THE SHADOWS OF AN ALLEY NEXT TO THE HOUSE HE HAD ONCE LIVED IN, JIMMY BEGINS HIS LONELY AND FEARFUL VIGIL...



I WISH I COULD BE SURE SOMEBODY WILL HEAR THIS POLICE WHISTLE...

THE HOURS DRAG BY, BUT NO SOUND DISTURBS THE UNEARTHLY QUIET OF THE DEAD, DESERTED STREET...



WHEN A FAR-AWAY CHURCH BELL TOLLS THE HOUR OF FIVE, JIMMY STANDS UP TO STRETCH...

DAWN IN A LITTLE WHILE... I'D BETTER BE GOING... MAYBE NEXT TIME...



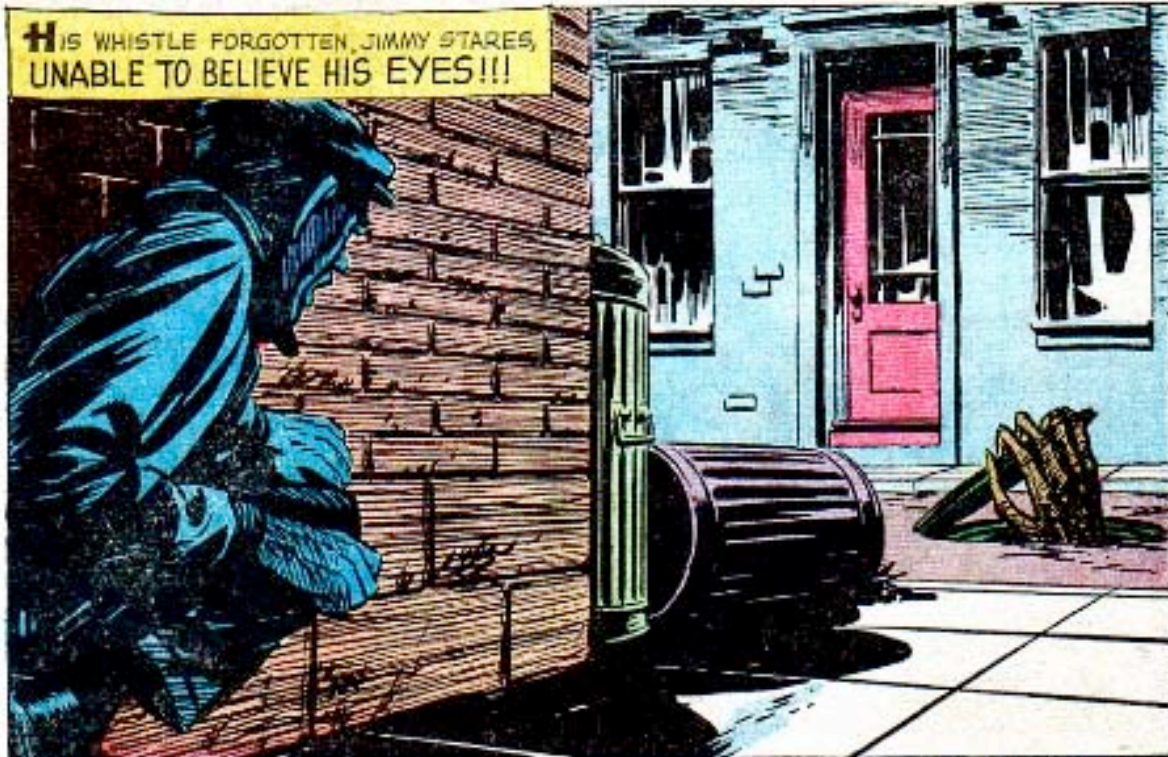
JIMMY STOPS IN MIDSTRETCH...



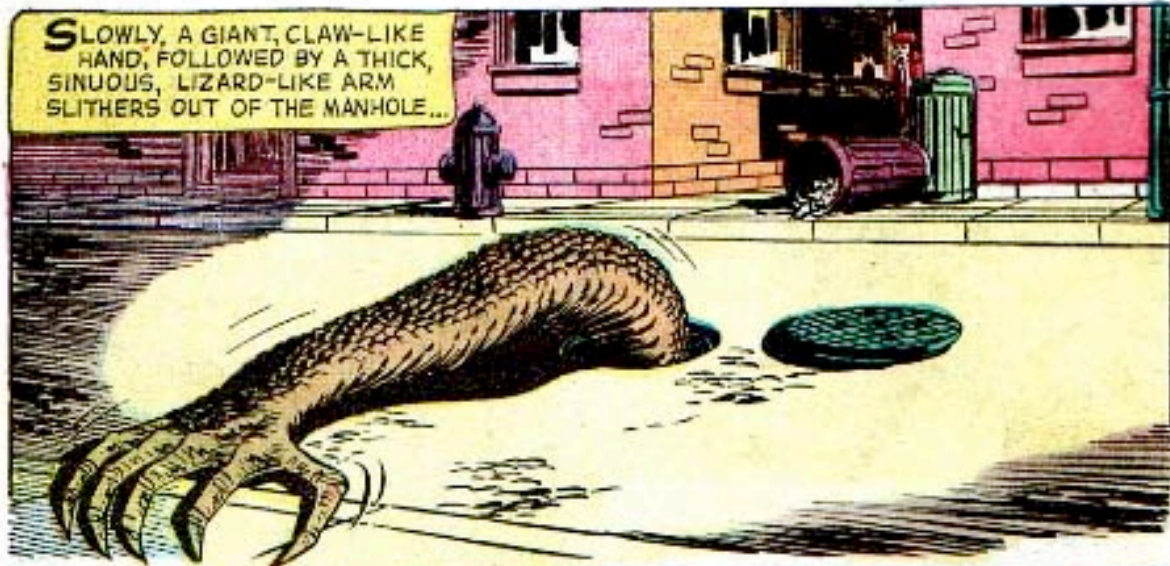
...THEN QUICKLY CROUCHS BACK INTO THE SHADOWS...



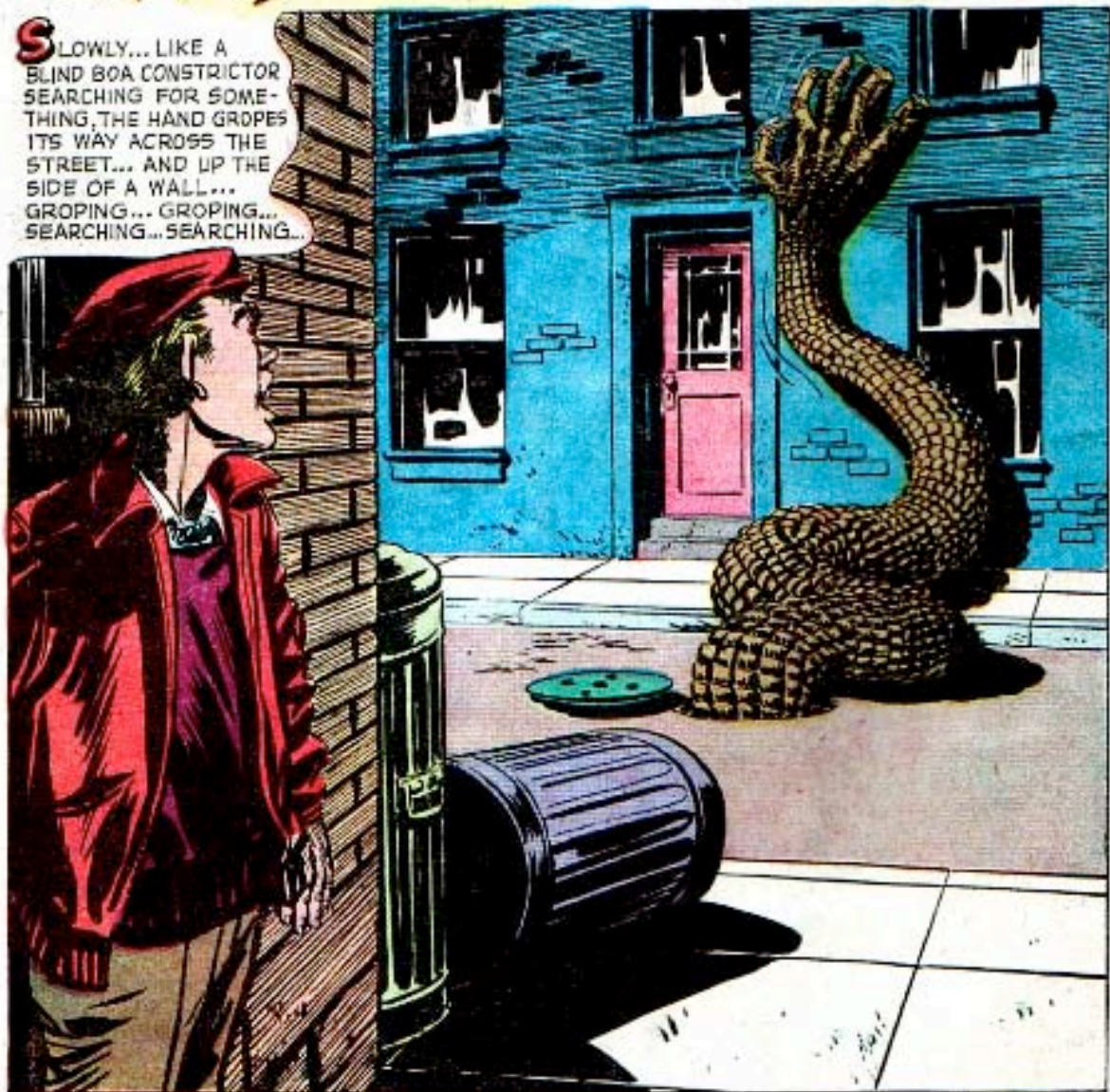
HIS WHISTLE FORGOTTEN, JIMMY STARES, UNABLE TO BELIEVE HIS EYES!!!



**S**LOWLY, A GIANT, CLAW-LIKE HAND, FOLLOWED BY A THICK, SINUOUS, LIZARD-LIKE ARM SLITHERS OUT OF THE MANHOLE...



**S**LOWLY... LIKE A BLIND BOA CONSTRICTOR SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING, THE HAND GROPEES ITS WAY ACROSS THE STREET... AND UP THE SIDE OF A WALL... GROPING... GROPING... SEARCHING... SEARCHING...





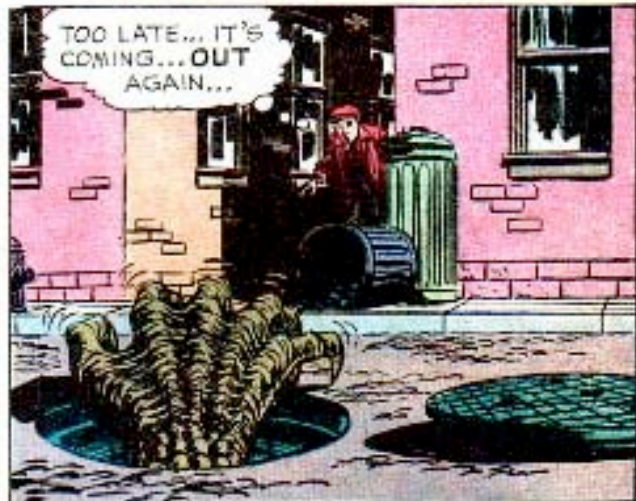
SUDDENLY THE BOY'S WHISTLE SLIPS FROM HIS TREMBLING FINGERS AND STRIKES THE GROUND... QUICK AS A WINK THE SNAKE-LIKE ARM SNAPS BACK INTO THE MANHOLE...



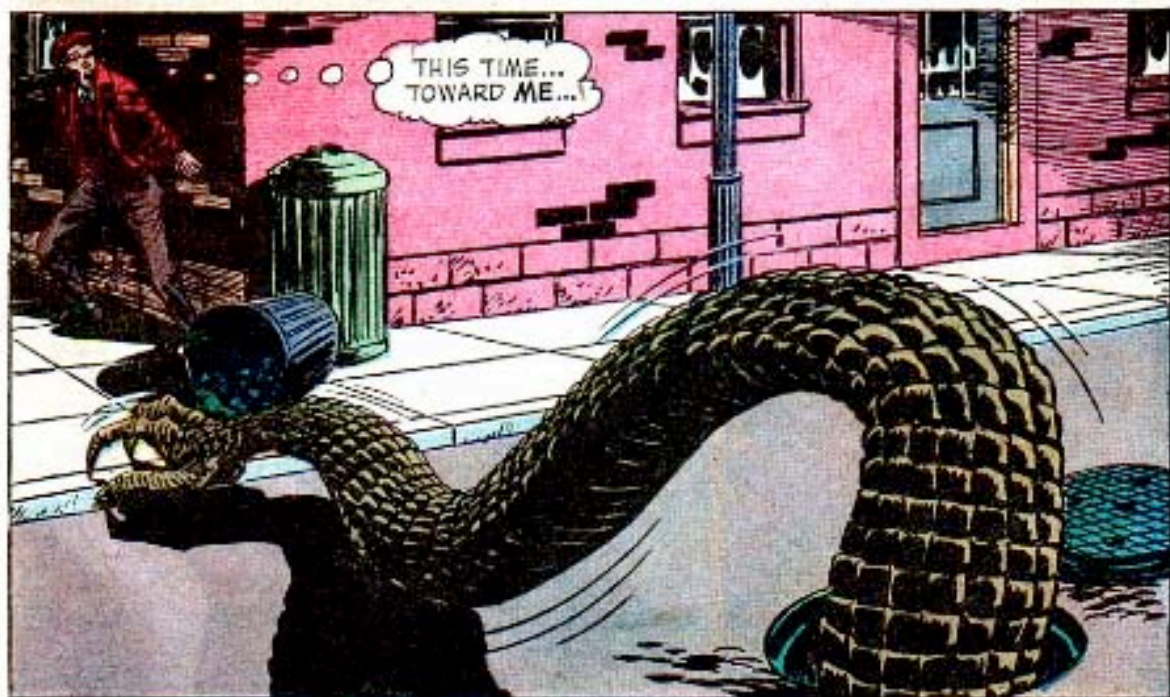
BUT...IT MOVES  
SO FAST... IT COULD  
SHOOT OUT AND GRAB  
ME BEFORE I  
COULD...



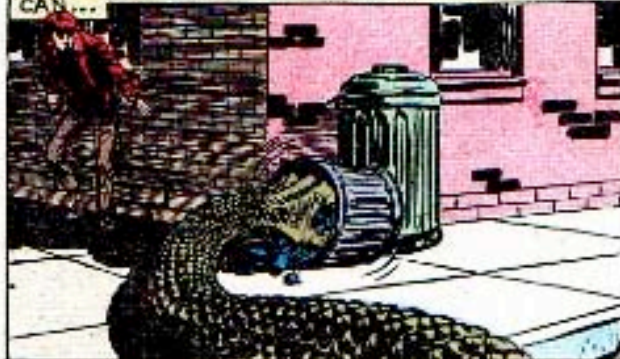
TOO LATE... IT'S  
COMING... OUT  
AGAIN...



THIS TIME...  
TOWARD ME...



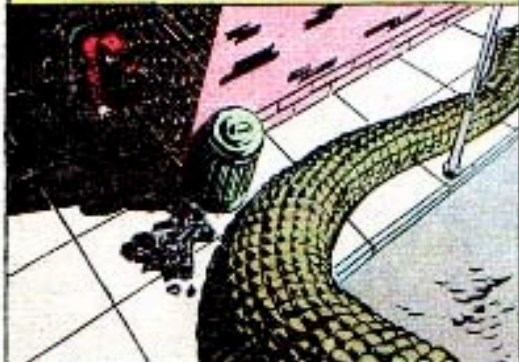
SLOWLY THE HAND GROPE TOWARD THE PETRIFIED BOY...IT STOPS...TO EXPLORE A GARBAGE CAN...



FINDING NOTHING, IT CRUSHES THE CAN AS THOUGH IT WERE TISSUE...



THEN, TO JIMMY'S RELIEF, IT TURNS AND GROPE ITS WAY OUT OF SIGHT...



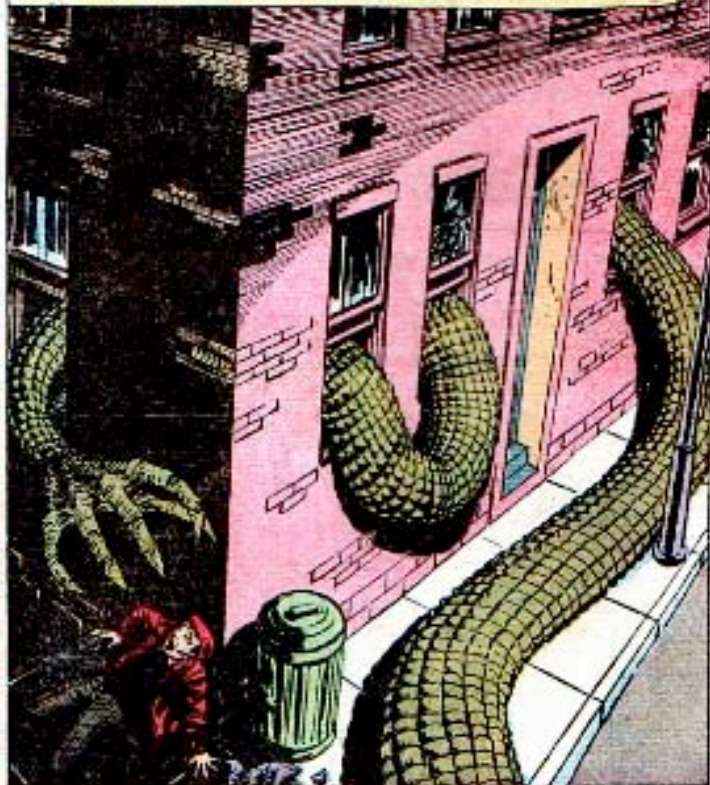
JIMMY WATCHES THE REPULSIVE ARM CONTINUE TO FLOW OUT OF THE MANHOLE... IT SEEMS ENDLESS... BUT THE MORE THAT COMES OUT, THE FARTHER AWAY THE HAND IS GETTING...



THEN A SIXTH SENSE WARNS JIMMY -



BUT TOO LATE--THE MONSTER HAS FOUND HIM!





THEN SILENCE AGAIN... JIMMY OPENS HIS EYES... AND STARES DOWN AT THE GREAT LIMP CLAW...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, BOY?



SORRY WE HAD TO LET IT GO SO FAR, BUT WE WANTED AS MUCH OF IT OUT IN THE OPEN AS POSSIBLE, TO MAKE SURE!

YOU WERE HERE ALL THE TIME..?



WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR YEARS, SON!

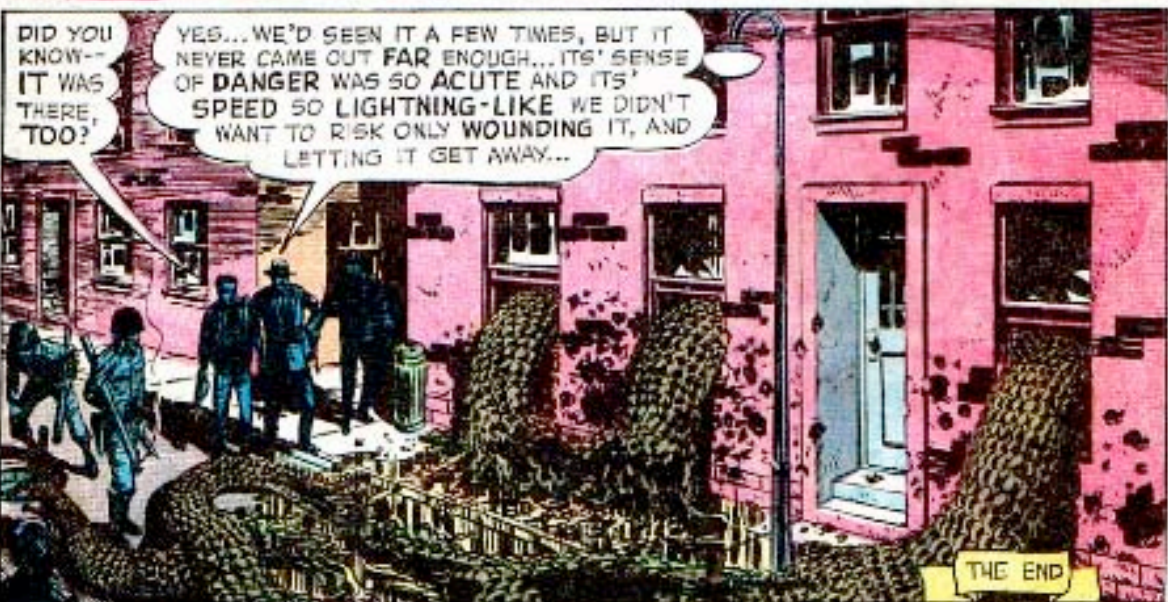
AND IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN YEARS LONGER IF YOU HADN'T SHOWN UP!

LOOK... THOSE LARGE PORE-LIKE OPENINGS IN THE PALM... IT'S FED BY ABSORPTION... AFTER CRUSHING ITS VICTIM...



DID YOU KNOW-- IT WAS THERE, TOO?

YES... WE'D SEEN IT A FEW TIMES, BUT IT NEVER CAME OUT FAR ENOUGH... ITS' SENSE OF DANGER WAS SO ACUTE AND ITS' SPEED SO LIGHTNING-LIKE WE DIDN'T WANT TO RISK ONLY WOUNDING IT, AND LETTING IT GET AWAY...



THE END

## Afterword

I have my own pet theory. After so many issues and so many years of “Little Lulu”, there’s going to be an *opposing* reaction in which the creative mind will seek to balance itself. The impulse to lash out in a dark and terrifying manner must have been overwhelming. “Horror” and “Comedy” as genres aren’t really that different. They’re both emotional. The pacing is often similar. After contributing to a giant sized “Tales from the Tomb” issue one month later, Stanley continued to branch out and by writing and drawing his own titles for Dell such as “Thirteen Going On Eighteen”, “Melvin Monster” and others. He was done with pure horror. Mission accomplished, the creative cosmos were once again at peace and The Beatles were free to conquer America...

There’s a great story about John Severin and his time with E.C. John Severin wouldn’t work on the horror titles (he didn’t like drawing them). He drew fantastic war and sci-fi stories instead. Then someone in the office said he *couldn’t* draw horror. John Severin went home, drew some horrific blood and guts art, and mailed it to Bill Gaines. Bill Gaines threw up when he saw it. You see, it’s not that Severin couldn’t draw horror, he just didn’t want to.

For those of you interested in the voluminous and amazing works of John Stanley, Frank M. Young has a great blog dedicated to Stanley:

<http://stanleystories.blogspot.com/>

*“The only certain freedom's in departure.”*

*- Robert Frost*

## **Reprinted In:**

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